

How to Work with Community Resources

Ideally, you should explore the resources available in your community before your situation becomes overwhelming, so you can avoid making important decisions during a time of crisis. However, the tips below apply even during times of crisis.

- Write down all of the information you are given including the name of the agency you called, the phone number or website, the contact person with whom you spoke, the date of your conversation, the services requested, the services promised and any agreed-upon decisions.
- When you make your call, be prepared with specific information, including physician's name; diagnostic information; insurance coverage and Medicare, MassHealth and Social Security numbers. Be prepared to answer questions such as "What type of care is the patient currently receiving and who is providing it?" and "Is there any special equipment in the home to assist with patient care?"
- When dealing with agencies, be specific about your needs.
- Mornings are usually the best time to call.
- Make sure you understand the follow-up procedures (i.e., who calls whom, what will be done next, what you need to do next) and write this information down.
- Be aware that you might be placed on a waiting list. The demand for existing dementia-related services, in particular, has increased while the funding for some service programs has decreased. By anticipating your needs and the needs of your loved one, you minimize the length of this waiting period.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help. The purpose of most community agencies is to provide services to individuals who need help. You are entitled to these services since many of them are paid for by your taxes, contributions, or fees for service.
- Keep in mind that not everyone is familiar with the needs of caregivers. Therefore, many professionals remain uninformed about stresses on you and your loved one. You might find yourself in situations where you need to educate professionals in the community before you can obtain services successfully.
- Don't give up – you are not alone! There are services available in your community.